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# FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## Technical Service Center Establishes Questions and Answers Web Page

FSIS issued Notice 82-05 on December 20 to announce the Technical Service Center’s (TSC) Questions and Answers page on FSIS’ Web site.

The TSC serves as the Agency’s center for technical assistance, advice and guidance regarding the implementation of national policies, programs, systems and procedures including implementation of the farm-to-table food safety strategy within a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point framework.

The questions and answers page was established to answer

various questions received from inspection personnel, industry and other interested parties, many of which pertain to recent FSIS policy issuances. The TSC will periodically update the page as new directives, notices and other technical documents are issued, and as it receives questions about them.

The “TSC Questions and Answers” site is available at: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About\\_FSIS/Technical\\_Service\\_Center/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/Technical_Service_Center/index.asp).

## E. coli Positive Samples Reported

The 18th *E. coli* O157:H7 positive case this year was reported from samples collected on December 6 in FSIS’ microbiological sampling program. The 18th positive sample was collected in Illinois.

This report brings to 278 the overall number of positive samples analyzed since the inception of the program. There have been 10,413 samples analyzed so far this year. Overall, 79,348 samples have been analyzed.

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## Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

**Ecuador**

**Japan**

**Morocco**

**People's Republic of China**

Complete information can be found at: [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/Export\\_Information/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/).

## *E. coli* Positive Samples ...

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For more information about results from the sampling program, visit FSIS' Web site at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2005\\_Ecoli\\_Positive\\_Results/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/2005_Ecoli_Positive_Results/index.asp).

## FSIS to Issue Directives and Notices

As a public health regulatory agency, FSIS publishes directives and notices to enable the Agency to carry out its mission of protecting public health. Within the next month, FSIS expects to issue the following directives and notices:

### Directives

- 5220.2 - Issuance of Ten-Day Letter for Inactive Operations (This directive sets out actions that a district manager may take with an establishment that is not operating or has not responded to district office inquiries regarding its operational status and intentions.)
- 7120.1 Amend. 6 - Safe and Suitable Ingredients (This transmittal issues the ongoing updates to Attachment 1 for FSIS Directive 7120.1. Attachment 1 identifies the substances that have been approved for use in meat and poultry products as food additives, approved in "generally recognized as safe" notices and pre-market notifications and approved in letters conveying acceptability determinations.)

- 10,230.6 - Submitting Tissue Specimens for Pathology to the Laboratory (This directive provides public health veterinarians with information on how to submit tissue samples for pathology to the FSIS Eastern Laboratory and addresses recommendations from the Office of the Inspector General.)

**Notices** (Numbers are assigned as notices are issued)

- Routine *Listeria monocytogenes* Risk-Based Verification Testing Program (This notice announces phase two of the Agency's overall *Listeria monocytogenes* risk-based verification testing program and three new sampling projects.)
- Performing Re-Examination of Bovines that Become Non-Ambulatory Subsequent to Passing Ante Mortem Inspection (This notice instructs inspection program personnel to tag as "U.S. Suspect" any bovine that a public health veterinarian re-examines because it passed ante mortem inspection but has

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## Hotline Answers “Panic Button” Food Safety Questions

“Help! I’m having 20 people over for dinner and I think I cooked the meat wrong!” The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline receives similar calls every day about the safety of food. During the holidays, people are busy and sometimes forget that improper handling and cooking can lead to foodborne illness.

Q. “My aunt has a holiday party every year. It lasts all afternoon and into the evening. She leaves food sitting out on the table for hours. I have small children and am concerned that they could get sick if they eat it. What should I do?”

A. Everyone should avoid perishable foods which are not either kept cold or hot. Hopefully your aunt will have some hot foods kept hot (above 140° F) in a chafing dish, slow cooker or warming trays. Cold foods are safe if kept cold (below 40° F) nestled in bowls of ice or replaced often from the refrigerator.

For additional food safety information about meat, poultry or egg products, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); for the hearing-impaired (TTY) 1-800-256-7072.

## Upcoming Directives and Notices...

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become non-ambulatory prior to slaughter.) establishment’s food defense plan.)

- PBIS Profile Extension Instructions on Food Defense Plans (This notice provides instructions to inspectors-in-charge for completing the profile extension about an
- Further information on upcoming directives and notices can be found on FSIS’ Web site at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations\\_&\\_policies/regulations\\_directives\\_&\\_notices/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/regulations_directives_&_notices/index.asp).

## FSIS Participates in Federal Docket Management System (FDMS)

Recently, FSIS began participating in the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS), a Federal governmentwide, centralized docket management system. The FDMS is a major component of the eRulemaking Initiative. The first phase of the eRulemaking Initiative included the development of Regulations.gov, a federal regulatory clearinghouse launched in January 2003.

The development of the FDMS is the second phase of the eRulemaking Initiative. The docket management system builds upon Regulations.gov and serves as the central repository for all FSIS rulemaking dockets, which are comprised of *Federal Register* notices, supporting materials and public comments. The FDMS also includes non-rulemaking documents such as meeting notices and information collection requests that agencies can post online for public comment. Agencies such as FSIS that have moved to FDMS post all their rulemaking materials on the eRulemaking site.

FDMS provides the public with the ability to type short comments directly into the comment field on a Web page or attach a file for lengthier comments. FSIS prefers to receive comments through FDMS. To submit comments via FDMS, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and, in the “Search for Open Regulations” box, select “Food Safety and Inspection Service” from the agency drop-down menu, then click on “Submit.”

Over the next 12-18 months FSIS will add published dockets, currently available on FSIS’ Web page, to FDMS.